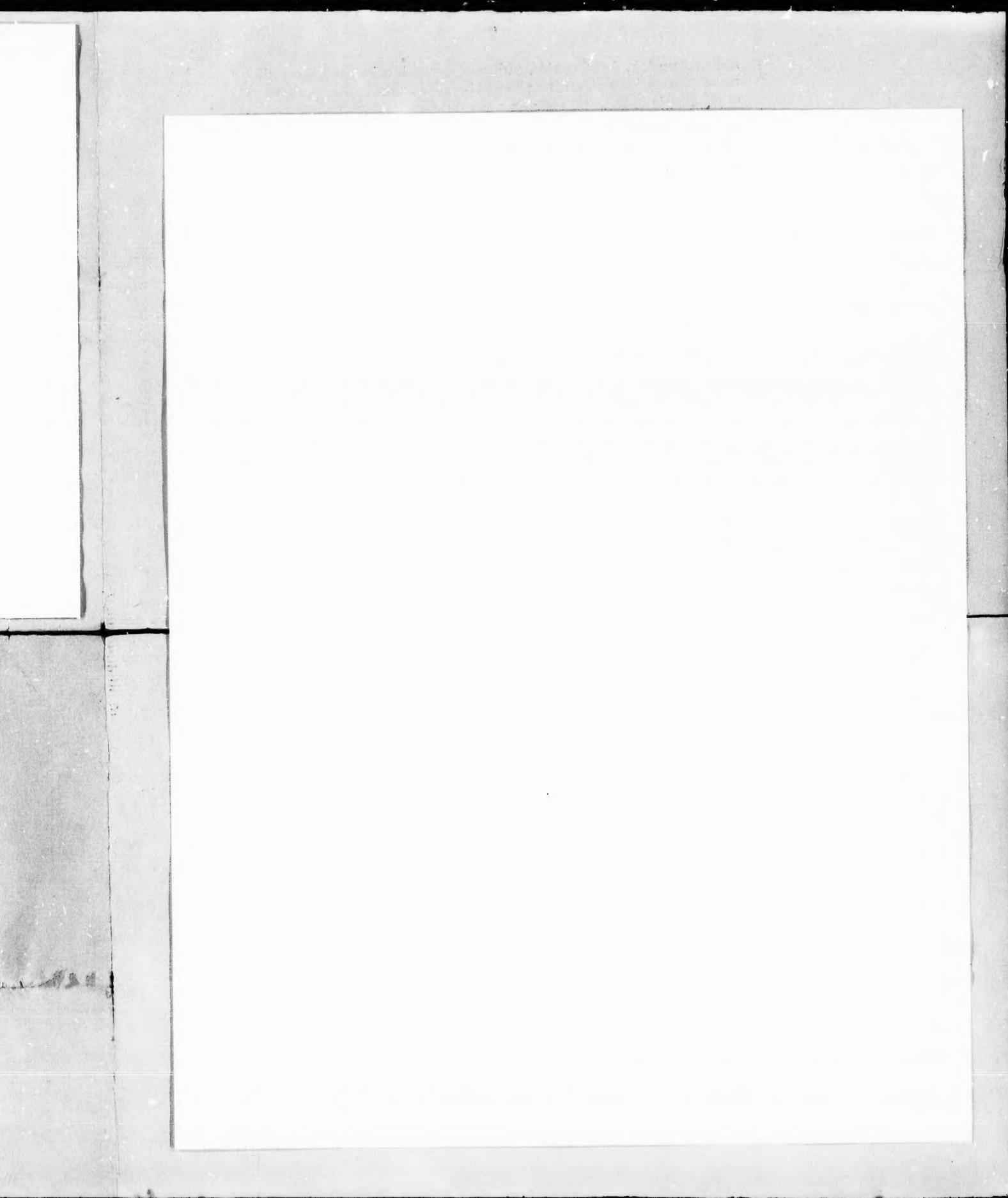


PETITION
FROM
Lower-Canada.

of 1834-24



6-24-24/1

To the Honourable the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS ELECTED TO SERVE IN THE ASSEMBLY OF LOWER-CANADA, AND OF THE MEMBERS FORMING THE MINORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, WHO PARTAKE THE OPINIONS OF THE PEOPLE—

SHEWETH :

That during the last Session of the Imperial Parliament, the Commons of Lower-Canada, in the name of the People, whom they represent, approached your Honourable House, by Petition, dated from Quebec, on the first day of March, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, setting forth the grievances which the People of the said Province suffered, arising out of the vicious principles upon which their Political Institutions are based, aggravated by a series of arbitrary Administrations to which the Province has been subjected.

That the enquiry which was constituted before a Select Committee, appointed by your Honourable House, upon Canada Affairs, on the fifteenth of April, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, induced the People of Lower-Canada to hope, that not only would the prayer of their Petition be listened to, but that the grievances therein set forth, which your Petitioners have reason to believe were fully supported, would be immediately redressed.

That this hope, which your Petitioners cannot deem unreasonable, was still further strengthened by the retirement of his Majesty's late Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Right Honourable E. G. Stanley, and the subsequent appointment of the Right Honourable T. Spring Rice, the more especially after the repeated declarations of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that His Majesty's Government was actuated by the strongest desire to render justice to the People of this Province, by removing the various abuses under which they suffer, and affording to them security against the recurrence thereof.

That your Petitioners, however, regret to state, that not only does the said Petition of the Commons of Lower-Canada to your Honorable House, seem to have been totally neglected, but that new abuses have been inflicted upon the People of this Province, which if not speedily removed, will tend to increase to an alarming degree the discontents which have so long prevail'd, and will ultimately alienate the affections of the People even from the Government of England itself.

That among the additional grievances of which the People of this Province have to complain, your Petitioners would invite the attention of your Honourable House to the fact, that His Excellency Mathew Lord Aylmer is still continued in the Government of this Province, after having been for-

mally accused, in the aforesaid Petition, of "illegal, unjust, and unconstitutional conduct," and after having borne himself towards the Representatives of the People of Lower-Canada, in a manner insulting to a body, and destructive of the respect which should be due to His Majesty's Representative.

That the acts of the Governor-in-Chief, of which the People of this Province still have to complain, were, for the most part, enumerated in the aforesaid Petition to your Honourable House; that since that time, the vindictive and bitter feelings, together with the arbitrary and unbecoming conduct which his Excellency has displayed towards the People of this Province, have created an universal feeling of discontent towards His Excellency's Administration.

That among the just subjects of complaint against the present Administration of this Province, the system which is exhibited in the distribution of offices necessarily holds a conspicuous place; that the chief recommendation to office continues to be a display of marked and bitter animosity towards the majority of the People of this Province; that it is seldom men of French Canadian origin find their way into office under any circumstances, but when they are appointed, it is not until they have alienated themselves from the sympathies of the People, and allied themselves with the factious minority opposed to the wishes and interests of the country; and that even the sacred character of justice has been recently polluted in its source, by the appointing to the high office of Judge of the King's Bench, for the District of Montreal, a man who was a violent and decided partisan of the Administration of the Earl of Dalhousie, and the declared enemy of the laws which he is sworn to administer; and also by the appointment of a great number of Commissioners, for the trial of small causes in different parts of the country, intentionally selected on the eve of a General Election, from among the notorious partisans of the present Administration.

That another cause of complaint which has arisen since the aforesaid Petition of the Commons of Lower-Canada, to your Honourable House, is the culpable indifference betrayed by the Governor-in-Chief on the subject of the frightful ravages committed by the Asiatic Cholera during the last summer. That a few days after the existence of the dreadful scourge in the City of Montreal was ascertained, the Corporation of the said City, in accordance with its strict line of duty, passed a series of Resolutions authorising an application to the Governor-in-Chief for an extension of the Quarantine Regulations to the Port of Montreal; and for an aid for the purpose of forwarding the destitute Emigrants to their destination; that the answer of the Governor was more than a bare refusal—it was marked by coldness and insult; that your Petitioners are firmly of opinion that the virulence which the disease subsequently assumed in the said City of Montreal, would have been considerably mitigated, had the Head of the Administration complied with the prayer of the Corporation; and that the People of the Country generally, and more especially the surviving relatives of the one thousand three hundred victims who died in Montreal, and of the thousands in the Province, who have fallen victims to the disease, look upon the conduct of His Excellency as one of the principal causes of their suffering and bereavement.

That since the aforesaid Petition of the Commons of Lower-Canada, your Honourable House, in whose deliberations, be it remembered, the People of this Province have no voice, have sanctioned the sale of lands belonging to this Province, to several individuals, using the title of the "British North American Land Company," and thereby have taxed this Colony, contrary to the most important and indisputable of the birth-rights of British subjects, which were more particularly acknowledged and confirmed to Colonies with local Legislatures by the faith and honor of the British Parliament, pledged by the Declaratory Act of 1778, the violation of which principle recognized in said Act, led to the rightful and successful resistance of the former British Colonies and dismemberment of the British Em-

pire. That your Petitioners, viewing with alarm such an encroachment upon their political privileges, would fain believe that it has been made without considering their Constitutional Rights and the provisions of the said Declaratory Act; that your Petitioners, nevertheless, solemnly protest against this violation of the most sacred rights of the People of Lower-Canada, and pray for the immediate repeal of the Act passed in favour of the said Land Company. That your Petitioners have reason to believe that the said tax is now being paid into the Colonial Chest of this Province, for the disposal of the Executive, without the sanction and in defiance of the expressed will of the Commons of Lower-Canada; that your Petitioners anticipate with fear, as a consequence thereof, a frightful increase of corruption in this Province; that in addition to the fears generated by this unconstitutional taxation, and the equally unconstitutional application of the said tax, your Petitioners foresee, as arising out of the peculiar powers conferred on the Company in question, the destruction of the political independence of the people, who may unfortunately become subject to its control, and who will be rendered basely subservient to the said Company.

That the continued dilapidations of the Revenues of the Province, in direct violation of the Constitution, are another source of alarm to His Majesty's Canadian subjects; that after the abandonment of the late Colonial Secretary's project to seize upon the said Revenues by suspending an Act which did no more than confirm to the Commons of Lower Canada a right previously recognized, without conferring any new privileges, His Majesty's Canadian subjects did not expect to be so soon called upon to resist similar unconstitutional encroachments and dilapidations; yet very recently the indisputable privileges of the Assembly have been again violated by the payment of the Public Servants without the sanction or cognizance of the only body authorized to give such sanction.

That the people of the old Colonies, now the United States of North America, however much they were aggrieved by attempts at unconstitutional taxation, had much less to complain of, on the score of Executive usurpation, than the People of this Province; the Assembly having repeatedly declared its fixed determination not to sanction that which it must ever consider a tyrannical violation of its rights, and which the people of this Province regard as a virtual dissolution of the Constitution, and for the consequences of which your Petitioners cannot answer.

That under these circumstances, your Petitioners claim for His Majesty's Canadian subjects, the protection of your Honourable House against these and similar acts of pillage. That your Honourable House may and ought at once to ascertain, in order to bring to just punishment those who authorized so criminal an assumption of power.

That inasmuch as no Session of the Provincial Parliament has intervened since the date of the aforesaid Petition of the Commons of this Province to your Honourable House, your Petitioners abstain from alluding at any length to the insuperable differences and the ever widening breach between the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council of this Province—differences springing out of the very constitution of the latter body: nevertheless, your Petitioners cannot avoid reminding your Honourable House that the aforesaid Petition contained a prayer that the Legislative Council, as at present constituted, be abolished, and that the People of this Province be empowered to elect the second branch of the Legislature in future, as the only means of producing that harmony, without which internal peace and good government cannot exist:

That as an evidence that the people at large fully participate in the opinions of the majority of the House of Assembly, your Petitioners take leave to refer your Honourable House to the result of the recent Elections in the said Province of Lower-Canada, which avowedly turned upon the approval or the disapproval of the Elective principle, and which result is almost unanimously in favour of the said principle.

Wherefore, your Petitioners, expressing the sentiments of the majority of the inhabitants of Lower-Canada, pray your Honourable House to comply with the prayer of the aforesaid Petition of the Commons of Lower Canada, dated on the first of March last, and also with that of the present Petition, by removing the abuses and grievances set forth therein, so that full justice be rendered to the House of Assembly and to the People whom it represents, and your Petitioners will ever pray.

Lower-Canada, December, 1834.

Signed,

L. J. Papineau,	D. B. Viger,	J. B. Proulx,
P. D. Debartzch,	P. A. Dorion,	Ed. Toomey,
P. Le Tourneau,	E. Bedard,	J. Dorion,
L. G. De Tonnancour,	H. S. Enot,	J. Bouthillier,
J. B. Meilleur,	X. Tessier,	J. T. Drolet,
Amable Dionne,	J. Blanchet,	E. E. Rodier,
P. E. Taschereau,	P. C. Marquis,	C. Courteau,
J. B. Fortin,	J. Dessaulles,	C. LaRocque,
L. M. Viger,	J. Leslie,	Ls. Bourdages,
J. Bouffard,	L. H. Lafontaine,	J. J. Girouard,
A. C. Taschereau,	Jacob Dewitt,	W. H. Scott,
J. B. Beaudoin,	J. M. Raymond,	S. Boue,
L. T. Besserer,	L. R. Blanchard,	J. M. Rochon,
Ed. Barnard,	A. N. Morin,	L. Lacoste,
X. Malhot,	Jos. Roy,	J. N. Cardinal,
Pierre Amiot,	Robt. Nelson,	C. Archambeault,
J. Deligny,	C. S. Cherrier,	C. H. O. Cote,
Alexis Motteuseau,	J. Picxel,	M. Hotchkiss,
V. Guillet,	C. Ov. Perrault,	Pierre Bureau,
R. J. Kimber,	E. B. O'Callaghan,	Marcus Child,
Al. Trudel,	Sab. De Bleury,	F. X. Larue
Pierre Bureau,	J. B. Tasche,	

